

Introduction

Promoting Cultural Sensitivity: A Practical Guide for Tuberculosis Programs That Provide Services to Persons from Somalia is one guide in a series that aims to help tuberculosis (TB) program staff provide culturally competent TB care to some of our highest priority foreign-born populations. Other guides in the series focus on persons from China, Mexico, Vietnam, and Laos.

Intended Audience

This guide is intended for health care providers, community-based workers, program planners, administrators, health educators, and resettlement agencies that work with Somali communities. This guide is designed to increase the knowledge and cultural sensitivity of health care providers, program planners, and any others serving persons from Somalia. The ultimate aim is to foster culturally competent TB care and services for Somalis in the United States.

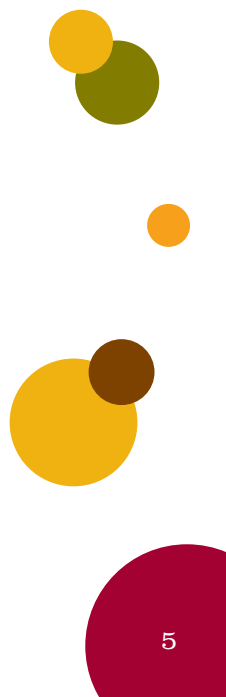
About the Guides

Each guide in this series includes the following:

- A two-page summary of program tips.
- Chapters on history and immigration; culture; health issues; and common perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs about TB.
- A concluding summary.
- Appendices, including additional resources for working with TB patients and interpreters.
- Useful resources.
- References.

Some of the information in the guides, such as the practical tips, can be applied directly, while other sections are more informative and will help providers better understand the background and sociocultural context of the population. A deeper understanding of pertinent issues will heighten the cultural sensitivity of TB care providers, enhance communication, and improve the overall effectiveness of organizations and staff in cross-cultural settings.

The content of these guides was gathered in two ways. First, an in-depth review of TB-related epidemiologic, behavioral, and ethnographic literature on Somalis in the United States was performed. Secondly, in 2003, the Division of Tuberculosis Elimination (DTBE) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) undertook a qualitative study to describe ethnographic aspects of the increasing burden of TB among five foreign-born populations. Selected major findings from this study are presented in each of the guides.



How to Use This Guide

- The tips section at the front of the guide provides a summary of practical suggestions, which are also interspersed throughout the guide in textboxes. Keep these tips readily accessible and refer to them as often as necessary.
- The chapters on history, immigration, and cultural issues (Chapters 1 and 2) provide important background information on the cultural group. Depending on your needs and interests, you will want to read in depth or skim.
- Chapter 3 begins with “Health Statistics at a Glance,” which highlights TB and related health issues. The remainder of the chapter expands upon this information. If you provide direct health services, you may wish to read this section in depth.
- Chapter 4 contains findings from the CDC study on common TB perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs. If you work directly with TB patients, you will want to read this section thoroughly.
- Appendix A presents a set of questions that can be used to elicit a patient’s understanding or perception of his or her own health problems. You may wish to use these questions or slightly modified questions to begin a conversation with a new TB patient.
- Appendix B provides suggestions for working with interpreters. Refer to these suggestions when working with people with limited English proficiency.
- Appendix C provides a list of resources for both patients and providers. These resources include culture-specific educational materials and fact sheets. Use them to enhance communication with patients of different cultures.
- Refer to the other appendices as needed.